

## **Exhibit O**

Miami New Times Article

CRIME | HUMOR

## Miami Man Fined \$120 Million for Making 96 Million Robocalls in Three Months

Somewhere across the mystical river Acheron, the River of Woe, deep down in the darkest pits of the Malebolge, the undead servants of Hell are picking open a new prison in Cocytus, the frozen lake where God has permanently trapped Satan in the Homeric underworld. They await the arrival of a new Prince of Darkness, a Bringer of Sadness, a Miami man named Adrian Abramovich, who is accused of making 96 million illegal telemarketing robocalls in just three months...

By Jerry Iannelli | June 23, 2017



New Times photo illustration / Source images via Shutterstock.com

Somewhere across the mystical Acheron, the "river of woe," deep down in the darkest pits of the Malebolge, the undead servants of Hell are picking open a new prison in Cocytus, the frozen lake where God has permanently trapped Satan in the Homeric underworld. They await the arrival of a new Prince of Darkness, a Bringer of Sadness, a Miami man named Adrian Abramovich, who is accused of making 96 million illegal telemarketing robocalls in just three months – many to people whose numbers were on the mythic National Do Not Call Registry. **As if this couldn't get worse,**

Yesterday the Federal Communications Commission said it had proposed a \$120 million fine against Abramovich, that trickster-god, in what the FCC has called "one of the largest – and most dangerous – illegal robocalling campaigns that the Commission has ever investigated." Abramovich was allegedly even sending calls over emergency phone lines used for medical professionals and hospital call centers.

According to **complaints sent to the FCC**, homeowners have said for years that robocalls have been trying to get them to sign up for fake free trips or vacations. The robocalls would tell the victims to "press 1" to hear more about exclusive vacation deals with companies such as TripAdvisor, Expedia, Hilton, and Marriott and then route anyone who fell for the scam to a call center, where the perpetrators would try to hook gullible customers into buying time-shares that had nothing to do with those companies.

Eventually, TripAdvisor got wind of the illegal calling campaigns and launched its own investigation, which traced the calls back to Abramovich, who ran a company called Marketing Strategy Leaders out of 2000 Bayshore Dr., a swanky address in the gated Coconut Grove community L'Hermitage. In April 2016, TripAdvisor tipped off the FCC.

The robocalls also directed the victims to various travel websites, which the FCC alleges were all also linked to both Abramovich and the executives at a Mexican resort chain called Sunset World Group, which was where the victims were *actually* being offered time-shares.



In December 2016, the FCC obtained Abramovich's call records from October through the end of that year – and found he was making more than 1 million robocalls per day.

"On December 13, 2016, Bureau staff subpoenaed Abramovich's call records for the three-month period from October 1, 2016, to December 31, 2016," FCC documents released yesterday read. "According to subpoena responses received by the Commission, Abramovich, purportedly doing business as Marketing Strategy Leaders, made 96,758,223 calls during this time period, averaging over a million calls a day."

Abramovich was allegedly using what's known as "neighbor spoofing," in which a caller matches his or her area code to the victim's location in order to increase the likelihood that a person will answer a random phone call. This is illegal, and the FCC says Abramovich committed wire fraud.

Here are some notes from customers, including a few who presumably screamed themselves hoarse into the phone after pressing 2 to "unsubscribe," only to learn the button did nothing:

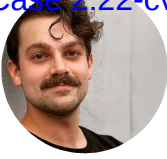
- My cell phone is on the do-not-call registry for the last couple of months. I have been receiving robocalls to my cellphone – typically one per weekday. The robot claims that I have “been preselected by Marriott for a free night stay...”
- "I'm on the do-not-call list, and I get telemarketing robo-calls to my cell phone every hour. It's unbelievably infuriating... All of them are a recording to either... redeem a Marriott vacation or to refinance my credit card debt."
- "I have daily – sometimes multiple times daily – inbound spoofed calls (same area code and prefix as my own phone number) purporting to be from Marriott, Priceline, etc. First a recorded voice, then a human 'check' to make sure I'm 'older than 30,' then a handoff to the salesperson."
- "I've received multiple calls from a robo-dialer claiming to be associated with Marriott Hotels within the past week. Each call offers the option to “press 2” to be removed from their calling list, but I've used this option every time and it is not producing any change in call frequency. I am also already on the federal do-not-call list."
- "I have been getting at least three or four calls a week from the last several months from these Marriott Hotel “free trip” jokers. I always hang up when I here [sic] the cheesy auto voice, but even when I miss the call I am miffed that my cell phone is getting clogged from “missed call” notifications from these scumbags! They always have the same area code and first three digits as my own cell phone... PLEASE TRACK DOWN THESE JERKS!"



Abramovich can still argue against the FCC's proposed fine; it's not clear if he has an attorney. There's no listed phone number for Marketing Strategy Leaders in state business records.



**KEEP NEW TIMES FREE...** Since we started *New Times*, it has been defined as the free, independent voice of Miami, and we'd like to keep it that way. Your membership allows us to continue offering readers access to our incisive coverage of local news, food, and culture with no paywalls. You can support us by joining as a member for as little as \$1.



**JERRY IANNELLI** is a former staff writer for *Miami New Times* from 2015 to March 2020. He graduated with honors from Temple University. He then earned a master's degree in journalism from Columbia University.  
**FOLLOW:** Twitter: @jerryiannelli

Use of this website constitutes acceptance of our terms of use, our cookies policy, and our privacy policy The Miami New Times may earn a portion of sales from products & services purchased through links on our site from our affiliate partners. ©2024 Miami New Times, LLC. All rights reserved.  
Do Not Sell or Share My Information

Powered by Foundation